312 bananas, but one could not say that irrigation is generally practised even when circumstances permit.

245 The papaya and the banana are increasingly cultivated, but they are by no means generally distributed. Here and there I [249] have seen a little sugar-cane cultivated by natives for their own [244] use. Near the main railway natives may be seen selling their products, which include cabbages and tomatoes. Some natives are today planting the guava tree which yields sweet palatable fruits. The fruits *olosia* are collected from the *usia* tree. When ripe, the fruit is yellow, round, and about two inches in diameter. These fruits are gathered in September, and the kernels, which are about the size of walnuts, are eaten uncooked. No fruits are collected for storage. *Olombula* fruits ripen in October, when they are eaten raw.

• 364 Each wife sends the food which she has cooked in her own kitchen to the *onjango* ("council house"). After carrying the food to this house of assembly, where the men meet each evening, the women return to their houses to eat alone, or with the young children.

343 252 [595] When there is a plurality of wives each has her own house and kitchen. Ngonga states that separate kitchens built outside the living houses are becoming more rare. The poor have their kitchens in the living room because they cannot provide separate structures for living and cooking.

264 262 25[illegible] The first meal is taken between five and six o'clock in the morning, the most usual food being meal sprinkled on boiling water to form a paste which is eaten with sweet potatoes. A mush of beans is eaten at night; generally there is no meal at midday. Three pounds of cooked beans are eaten by a person for one meal. Over the cooking pots leaves are placed to keep in the steam, especially when the pot contains sweet potatoes. I have made a meal from the sticky, gluey paste which results from sprinkling meal on boiling water. The chief objection to this food is the unpleasant quantity of grit in the meal, owing to the fact that it is pounded on the rocks. Manioc and sugar-cane are chewed at irregular intervals of the day.

262 The amount of meat consumed by the Ovimbundu is small in comparison with the quantity of vegetable food used. This adoption of diet of a particular kind is largely a matter of habit, and there is no good reason why meat should not form a larger proportion of the food supply. The Ovimbundu do not kill their cattle for food though they will eat the meat of oxen which have died from natural causes.

235 guese for a long period. The chicken is highly esteemed as a sacrificia
[262] animal, but it could not be said that the flesh is in common use. Thi
failure to develop and utilize to the full, again raises the point o
social custom and economic habit. Chickens are cared for, as ma
be seen in the way they are cooped at night. Sometimes a hen ma
be seen sitting on her clutch of eggs in a dark corner of a hut, unmo
lested by people and dogs; yet it is certain that there is no concen
tration on the rearing of poultry.

Eggs are laid, and chickens are hatched throughout the year
except in the months of November and December when corn supplie
[252] are at their lowest ebb. Eggs are boiled, or fried on a fragment o
[264] pottery, but they are not sucked.

231 The domestic cat is not raised by the Ovimbundu. Wild cats ar
common, but there is no evidence of their domestication. Smal
birds and monkeys are sometimes kept as pets.

TRADE AND TRANSPORT

438 Caravan trade, which was at one time an important factor o
tribal life, is now confined to short journeys for transporting corn,
beans, and beeswax to traders' stores. But in spite of present-day
439 decline of transportation the memory of more prosperous time
still exists.

Names of distant places survive in the Umbundu language; thus
Tanganyika is called Nakandundu, while the name for far eastern
Angola is Muacimbundu, the name of a one-time important chief.
The Umbundu language is understood in all parts of Angola, far
away from typical Umbundu centers of culture.

484 In the old days there were professional leaders of caravans, and a
788 ceremony was conducted before starting. The medicine-man and the
778 village chief were the principal performers in a rite which consisted
787 of bringing from its box the head of a former chief, sewn in oxhide.
An animal was sacrificed so that the blood could be used for sprinkling
on the chief's head, and on some occasions of this kind the head was
sewn up in a new piece of oxhide. Direct appeal was made to the
preserved head by the reigning chief, who asked for good fortune on
the journey.

The medicine-man who accompanied a caravan carried with him
a female wooden figure decorated with feathers (Plate XXI, Fig. 5).
When a branching of the paths gave rise to doubts concerning the
correct way the wooden figure was consulted by the medicine-man.

584 you." There is no infant betrothal. There is not and never was any
[567] compulsion of a girl in marriage, but slave girls were disposed of in marriage by their masters.

832 A girl is not allowed to do anything to show that she loves a boy, for it would be a great shame for her to tell the boy that she loves him. Often a girl who prefers a boy will pretend that she does not like him.
[539] The Ovimbundu have a story which states that a man said, "I will bring my cow to the green grass"; he did so, but the cow would not eat. This expresses the idea that a boy would not like a girl who confessed a preference for him.

MARRIAGE

585 The prospective bride chooses one married woman and six unmarried girls to accompany her to the house prepared by her husband. Here a feast consisting of a pig and some chickens is provided by the husband for the relatives of both families. For three nights the girl returns to the house of her parents while the boy sleeps at his home. The married woman and six girls sleep at the house prepared by the bridegroom. During these days beer is provided by the boy's parents. The prospective husband is ironically addressed as *sandombua*. *Ndombua* means bridegroom, *sa* is an abbreviation of *isia* meaning father. The term "father bridegroom" refers to the fact that the youth is a potential husband only; the marriage has not been consummated.

On the fourth day the bride brings her supply of domestic utensils. These are the cooking pots (*olombia*); the wooden spoons (*ovito*); the brush of grass for sweeping (*olueyo*); some meal; also the pounder (*upi*). For the first month the wife is not allowed to cook in her own home; she cooks food in the home of her husband's parents and sends
[264] it to the council house (*onjango*) where her husband takes his meals with other men according to Umbundu custom. At the end of the first month of married life the mother of the husband invites any three old women who have been happily married to lay the hearth
[782] stones in the new home. Each of the old women brings a stone for the hearth. A chicken is killed and its blood is sprinkled on the hearth stones. While the young wife is preparing food at the new hearth, she is helped by the old women. If the girl is stirring with the big wooden spoon, one of the old women places her own hands over those of the girl. There is this kind of guidance in every action.

I understand that at the present day virginity in a bride is not so highly valued as in former days. The old custom was an examination

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbunda FP13

576 *konyimo oko* are spoken. The literal interpretation of these words is "back there." Ngonga says the words actually mean "excuse my back."

827 576 Spitting in the vicinity of the house of the king or of the chief is not allowed. "If you did that in the old days, you would have to pay something." Some people spit near the hearth in their own houses. A man who spits in the road is expected to cover the spittle. No person would spit in the presence of the chief or of the king. A hand should be placed in front of the mouth by a person who is coughing or sneezing.

576 [851] Shortly after the birth of a boy or girl all who are on good terms with the parents greet them by saying *kalunga*. The word is repeated four times with clapping of the palms. When words have been imperfectly heard and the listener desires repetition it is customary to say *kuku* in an interrogative tone.

[264] No particular etiquette is observed when eating. Two or three children eat from one platter, helping themselves with their fingers to the mush or sweet potatoes.

Rules forbidding the preparation of food by menstruating women, likewise prohibitions relating to stepping over a person, are mentioned in discussing taboos and omens.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF PLAY, MUSIC, AND DANCING

524 182 533 The educational value of play lies in its imitation of the pursuits of adult life. Though there are specialists in music, dancing, and singing, these exercises are indulged in by everyone. Music, singing, and dancing are more than amusements, they are fundamental as coordinating forces in tribal life at all levels of culture (W. D. Hambly, Tribal Dancing and Social Development, London, 1926). [113]

Among the Ovimbundu *Cimbamba Co Lia* is a popular game for girls, who form a circle, join hands, and sing:

PART I

524 [535] *Omola una, ndo sile vekango, Cimbamba co lia* ("That little child was left in the desert, the nighthawk ate it"). At the word *Cimbamba* they begin to dance, facing from side to side in such a manner that they meet and bow. Some sing, *Cimbamba co lia* ("The nighthawk ate him"), and others respond, *Kalikisi* ("'tis the goblins"), as many times as they wish. Finally a return is made to the first words which are sung again. All musical transcriptions have been made by Dr. G. Herzog from my phonographic records.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[1874-1911]

not now possible for field work to supply the gaps in the written material.[73]

The traditional kinship system had neither clans nor segmenting lineages. The patrilineal group (*olusu*) was localized in a village, the group head being at the same time a village headman. Patrilineal ties do not seem to have been recognized between villages.[74] This social independence of the agnatically united village was reflected in the surrounding palisade, in the close clustering of the houses (nowadays much more spread out) and in the village institutions of the dancing-floor and the men's house (*osojango*). It was here that all the men and boys, from seven or eight up, ate. Hastings writes, 'Each woman, after preparing the meal, takes or sends the portion which is for the male members of her family. This food is common property. As soon as enough has arrived some responsible member among the men will have it divided among the boys. For days a man may never taste of the food which is prepared by his wife.'[75] The men's house was also a club, and a court-room, where minor cases were decided. It was through this localized body of patrikin that an individual claimed land and residence rights and through it that he participated in the political system.[76]

The matrilineal group (the *olusina*) was composed of the descendants of a common great-great-grandmother.[77] According to Childs, it had a head who might also at times be a village headman,[77] and it was presumably the matrilineal group head who settled the disputes over property which Hambly says

[73] For an attempt at reconstructing Umbundu kinship on the basis of Childs's book see J. A. Barnes's review of *Umbundu Kinship and Character* in *Man*, 1950, pp. 156–158. It may be mentioned that the terms 'the side of the bow' and 'the side of the basket' are used simply to mean 'patrilateral kin' and 'matrilateral kin' (Dr. Childs, private information, and my own inquiries).

[74] A rather ambiguous phrase in Childs p. 43 ('The *olusu* consists of a large number of local village groups'), which might be interpreted as meaning that villages were patrilineally grouped into clans, seems really to mean simply that the village is the *olusu* unit.

[75] Hastings, p. 77.

[76] Ibid., p. 78. Childs, pp. 43–44.

[77] Hastings, p. 83, states that the matrilineal group consists of the descendants of a common great-great-great-grandmother (that is, five generations), and on p. 91 says that it consists of a group 'linked by a common great-great-grandmother'.

[77] Childs, p. 44.

6:Edwards E-3 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

593 604 in the hands of the mother's brother, though the father could, if he wished, intervene; and a man could establish a shrine of his own while his father lived.

613 It is not altogether easy to see how the matrilineal group maintained its cohesion. It was not the working team on which the caravan trade operated since a man's father had first claim on his services, and he could travel with other relatives. Within it alone loans need not be repaid and accusations of sorcery were made; with this in mind, it is evident why, as Dr. Hastings tells us, people tended to avoid the company of their matrikin, [578] and why most disputes arose in the matrilineal groups.[21] It 613 seems that probably the key to the functioning of the matri- 437 lineal groups lies in the details, not now recoverable, of the economy of the caravan trade. As everybody, however successful, was in danger at some time or another of incurring heavy losses,[22] an arrangement by which anybody who was in difficulties could call on his kin for help would be generally acceptable. The association of mutual aid of this sort with matrilineal rather than patrilineal kin would spread losses geographically and would exclude conflicts over currency and movable property from village life. Moreover, the dispersal of the matrilineal kin would provide an individual with business contacts over a considerable area.

5. *Contemporary Kinship Norms*

593 Much of this has disappeared. The men's house is no longer 264 the dining-room of the village male population. Men now often 178 eat with their wives and children though attitudes and practice of this vary between households. People in their twenties knew of the existence of these avoidance rules but it seems that the rules forbidding sons to eat with their mother and eldest sons and daughters to eat with their father are now generally ignored.

[692] [21] Hastings, pp. 18, 87. Disputes within the matrilineal group could be, and very often were, referred to the sub-chief and king. The account of legal proceedings in Hastings (pp. 139–51) suggests that a high proportion of the cases heard by the kings were to do with sorcery. In such cases the social extension of the matrilineal group beyond the area of the sub-chiefdom and the wider political integration achieved by the kingdoms 'co-operated' in preserving a range of social relations beyond the sub-chiefdom.

[22] Apropos of losses Childs quotes Magyar as saying that the Ovimbundu traded for excitement rather than gain (p. 204).

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

for the bride's village. Here they may be greeted with formal speeches of welcome in Portuguese, a usage copied from the reception of missionaries.

One only turns up to a wedding if one has been invited, and not everybody who is a kinsman living in the neighbourhood is invited. Nor is there any marked distinction between kin and non-kin in the ceremony, except for the ending of avoidances and the recognition of the father's sister, who is recompensed for her services as nursemaid. Village membership is significantly recognized in the distribution of food, and the sending of the party to the bride's home to represent the bridegroom's village.

Umbundu marriage is virilocal, although a certain number of marriages are within the village. Apart from such marriages, it seems to be rare to find a man settling in a village because his wife has kin there.

Although during the early months of the marriage the bridegroom's mother may supervise the bride's work, the individual household is essentially an independent unit[13] and was not even in the past merged with other household units to form a 'grandfamily'. This independence is not isolation. I have only a very few times seen houses with any sort of compound about them. Much of domestic life, eating, working, resting, talking, may be done out of doors in front of the house. Paying visits is a great feature of village life especially when the day's work is over, although there is also a term *oku pasula*, to visit in the morning, referring to what are usually just short calls, involving the exchange of greetings. Perhaps the opportunity of calling and being called on is one of the factors maintaining the village as a social unit. The idea that a man should not eat with his wife still survives to some extent so that questions on this topic receive contradictory answers. Observation shows that even among the men who travelled on the caravans, eating with one's wife is the general practice.

One of the most striking features of Umbundu domestic life is the close companionship which exists between husband and wife and which is unquestionably a modern development.[14]

[13] See Magyar, pp. 281–3.

[14] The role of the *Ondjango* as described by Childs and Hastings indicates that a man's normal companions both for eating and recreation were other men.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

At the other end of the age-scale it is not easy always to tell to what household a child is attached. Small children may often eat with kin other than their own parents if they like them and thus share in the lives of two households. Children and adolescents may go on visits to kin and this may lead to permanent residence. This familiarity with other households is not confined to children. Although, as has been stated, eating with one's wife is the usual practice, it is by no means uncommon to see two or more men eating together, either because the wife of one of them is away or simply to be sociable.

This right of children to move about, coupled with such other factors[20] as the relatively high divorce rate, tends to bring about quite a high proportion of children who live with kin other than their own parents. Out of 70 under 20's in Epalanga (out of a total population of 148), 34 had both parents living in Epalanga,[21] 23 had one parent living in Epalanga and 13 had neither parent living in Epalanga. Of the 23 who had only one parent living in Epalanga, 7 lived with their father and 16 with their mother. Those 7 living with their father were all over 14, thus confirming the norm given by informants that young children on the death of the mother go to their mother's kin until they 'have sense', that is, are about 12 or 13, when they return to their father. Of the 13 who were living with neither parent, 2 (boys) were living with a cross-cousin (father's sister's son, for whom the term 'father' can be used), 1 (boy) with a patrilateral 'father,' 2 (1 girl, 1 small boy) with a mother's mother, 4 (3 boys, 1 girl) with a sister's husband, 1 (boy) with a paternal half-brother, 1 with a fiancé's father, 1 (boy) with a mother's brother, and on 1 (girl) I have no information.

These figures are too small to base any very strong argument on them. It is, however, notable that only 1 of the 12 children on whom information was obtained was living with a mother's brother, whereas 4 were living with a brother-in-law. This seems to conflict with statements made earlier as to the present-day trend of individuals to settle with their mother's brothers.

[20] Childs notes about the traditional system that the sending of children to stay with kin or friends for a year or two was common (pp. 104–5).

[21] This figure includes one case where although both parents lived in Epalanga they were separated.